

ANNEX XIII

Letter dated 12 November 1962 from the Acting Secretary-General to the Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba

(Original: English)

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Not long ago, in an hour of unprecedented danger in man's history, when the very existence of all of us literally hung in the balance, you were good enough to invite me to your country and to exchange views with me. That statesmanlike action on your part helped to reduce tension and dull the edge of crisis and thus was a positive contribution to the effort which is, in fact, still underway to avert the unspeakable catastrophe of nuclear war.

I know at first hand, therefore, of your deep concern for peace, although not at any price, and never at the expense of your country's sovereignty and freedom. I registered your unwillingness for this reason to accept United Nations observers on Cuban soil for the purpose of inspecting the removal of the Soviet-owned offensive weapons. While, in my desperate effort to save the peace, I urged upon you that course of action, in view of your rejection of it, I no longer press it. It is, however, on the strength of my personal knowledge of your deep concern for peace that I take the liberty to offer to you a suggestion which, in my view, affords you the opportunity to render another and very substantial service to peace, which, I am sure, would be warmly applauded throughout the world.

The suggestion which I now advance could, I earnestly believe, meet the objections raised against United Nations inspection while at the same time satisfying the international need for reasonable reassurance. Both these ends could be met, in my view, if you were to invite the Ambassadors accredited to your Government from a selected number of countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America to constitute an informal group which, acting in concert, would undertake to verify the removal from Cuba of the offensive weapons systems in question and to report to you and to me their verifications to this effect.

It occurs to me also that, should this suggestion find favour with you, the arrangement of the Ambassadors could, in fact, be projected beyond the immediate crisis situation by continuing to serve as a useful liaison between you and me with regard to the longer range concerns which you stressed during our talks.

I present this idea to you on an informal, personal and entirely confidential basis. Since I feel most sincerely that it could be helpful to your country and to all the world in serving the purposes of peace, I naturally hope that it will commend itself to you. May I add that a very important factor in this reckoning is my conviction that an arrangement of this kind would be extremely helpful, in fact it could be decisive, in my persistent effort to bring to a very early end the quarantine on shipping which is so intolerable to your country. Similarly, it could be helpful to me in achieving firm assurance of full respect and protection for the territorial integrity of Cuba, thus allaying all concerns about invasion. Should it be the case that you find merit in my suggestion, the details could easily and quickly be worked out between us and it could be promptly put into effect.

Please be assured of my continuing goodwill and best wishes.

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